



City of San Diego  
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For Immediate Release

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**Infrastructure Committee Tackling Decades-Old Sidewalk Policies**

*Kersey wants common-sense way to ensure sidewalk safety and neighborhood walkability*

SAN DIEGO, California, Monday, Dec. 9, 2013 – San Diego City Council’s Infrastructure Committee today began the process of revising the City’s sidewalk policies, one of which hasn’t been updated in nearly 40 years.

Following a staff report on current policies and practices, the Infrastructure Committee tasked Chair Mark Kersey and Vice Chair Myrtle Cole to work with the IBA and City staff on policy changes to make more progress on repairing San Diego’s more than 5,000 miles of public sidewalks.

“The City’s long-time neglect of our infrastructure is as evident on our cracked and broken sidewalks as it is on our bumpy, potholed streets,” said Councilman Kersey, chair of the Infrastructure Committee. “We need to overhaul these outdated policies in order to make San Diego a more walkable community with priority on creating safe routes to schools, enhancing ADA accessibility and improving business frontages.”

“Current policies for who is responsible when sidewalks are damaged or deteriorated has led to confusion and paralysis when it comes to repair and maintenance,” Kersey said.

Earlier this year, sidewalks were identified as one of the top priorities for the Infrastructure Committee. They have also consistently rated highly at the Infrastructure Committee workshops being held in each council district throughout the City. Kersey and the committee were successful in securing funding for the City’s first-ever sidewalk assessment which is set to begin this month.

“By having the policies updated as we conduct assessments, we can tackle this problem in a common sense way to ensure that our sidewalks are safe for pedestrians and contribute to more walkable communities,” Kersey said.

A staff report presented at today’s Infrastructure Committee meeting painted the picture for how the City currently manages repairs and maintenance of its sidewalks. According to the report, many of the City’s sidewalks were installed during the rapid development of the City’s roadway system from the start of World War II through the 1970s. There are also much older walkways with some dating to the early part of the last century.

Another key take away from the report was the number of unfunded missing sidewalks. According to staff, there are approximately 425 requests for installation of missing sidewalks with an estimated cost of \$170 million. Each project is tagged at about \$400,000.

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“Some neighborhoods are missing sidewalks on common walking routes and that is unacceptable,” said Councilman Kersey.

The sidewalk policy was last updated in 1975 when the City established a (50/50) Sidewalk Repair Cost Share Program to help property owners in the repair of sidewalk damage adjacent to their property. To date the program has been under-utilized with less than one-fourth of the funds dedicated to the program being used so far during this fiscal year. However, due to recent publicity of the program there has been an influx in interested participants.

The Infrastructure Committee will be seeking input from residents, stakeholders, and community groups as it considers improvements to the City’s sidewalks policies. Final recommendations are expected to be proposed in concert with the consideration of the City’s first every comprehensive sidewalk assessment, likely in the Fall of next year.